

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Jeanne Cooper on behalf of Bonnie Ariano, Ellen Alexander, Walter T. Coryell, Jessica Dickerson, Rea Goldfinger, Major Williams for R. Gery Hofmann, Molly Knipe, Kathleen O'Brien, Margery Patten, Bonnita Spikes, Debra Tall, Deborah A. Unitus, Frank R. Weathersbee, and Jeanne Yeager.

STAFF: Anne Litecky

GUESTS: Steve Arentz, Michelle Barker, LaMonte E. Cooke, Dick Goldstein, Michele Hughes, Stephanie Jones, Lisae Jordan, Pauline Mandel, Shelly McMath, Pat Melcer Lance Richardson, Sgt. Mike Smith, Julian A. Watson, Jean B. Webb, Major James Williams, and J. Owen Wise.

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER: Ellen Alexander, Chair, began the meeting at approximately 10:50 a.m. and welcomed guest victim service and law enforcement representatives from Kent and Queen Anne's counties.

RETREAT REPORT/MINUTES:

- ❖ Motion: Move to approve Minutes of March 4, 2012.
- ❖ Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Governor's Victim Assistance Awards Luncheon

- The Governor's Victim Assistance Awards Luncheon was held on May 4, 2012.
- This year the program was shortened and many people felt that it was too impersonal and too brief.
- The Luncheon Committee would like to hear comments from others who attended the luncheon.

❖ 2012 Legislation: 2012 Key Bills and the Impact

- There were several priority bills for the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) this session. A handout was provided listing the bills. Some of those bills include the following:
 - HB 1074/SB612 - Criminal Law-First Degree Assault-Strangulation
 - This bill would add strangulation to first degree, felony assault.
 - Passed Senate
 - Chairperson of House Judiciary Committee failed to bring bill to a vote in the Committee.
 - HB 1146/SB 647 - Domestically Related Crimes-Reporting
 - This bill would help to better determine if an assault is domestically related.
 - Passed House and Senate
 - HB 769/SB 291 - Unemployment Insurance-Coverage-Victims of Domestic Violence
 - Would enable victims to successfully claim unemployment insurance.
 - Passed House and Senate
 - HB 8/SB 175 – Crimes-Electronic Communication- Harassment
 - Would prohibit the use of electronic communication with the intent to harass and establish penalties for violations.
 - Passed House and Senate
 - HB 766/SB 572 – State Government-Commemorative Days-Crime Victims and Advocates

- Proclaim April 3 as Crime Victim and Advocate Commemorative Day.
 - Passed House and Senate

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

❖ Committee Chair Selection

- Board members were asked to consider serving as a State Board committee chair person and to also consider if the current established committees are still relevant to the Board's priorities.

❖ VINE (parole and probation, detention centers and District Court/HB 411)

- Parole and Probation
 - Parole and Probation was added to VINE
 - All 900 agents from Parole and Probation will be trained on VINE and VINE Watch.
- Detention Centers
 - There have been continuous problems with detention centers not advising the State Coordinator or Appriss, Inc. of about pending booking system changes. Without prior notification, VINE will most likely go offline.
 - Anyone having problems was asked to please contact the State Victim Coordinator
- District Court/HB 411
 - Anyone receiving letters/subpoena's from District Court will now include VINE information.
 - A SAVIN grant has picked up the expense and the Administrative Office of the Courts will oversee the project which should be implemented by the end of this month.
- Contract with Apriss puts out materials and advertising each year. This year the money will be spent on billboards on the Eastern Shore between May and August.
- The SAVIN two year grant will end on June 30.

❖ Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland, Class of 2012

- Completed their 9th year of basic training for crime victims last week.
 - The training provides an array of services including restitution, restorative justice, victims' rights, VINE, homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, case management, cultural diversity, trauma, human trafficking, substance abuse, team building.
 - The Academy has guest panels from the judiciary, criminal justice system, faith based resiliencies.
 - Certification and advanced training for alumni was also available during this year's session.

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

❖ State's Attorney Queen Anne's County

- State's Attorney Lance Richardson thanked the Board for inviting him to the meeting.
- He advised that there is a great deal of coordinating efforts and collaboration in Queen Anne's County amongst the Sheriff's Office, the Child Advocacy Center, and other agencies.

❖ Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office, Gary Hofmann and Auxiliary

- Major James Williams advised that the Sheriff's Office works very closely with the Queen Anne's County State's Attorney's Office.
- Other than the Deputy out on the street, there was a void in victim services until the victim got to the level of the State's Attorney's Office.
 - A victim/witness services program was created within the Office of the Sheriff
 - There is no money for a full time coordinator. Jean Webb is a full time volunteer. Applied for a grant but was denied.
 - Accredited law enforcement agency and must meet certain standards with respect to victims/witnesses and Ms. Webb fulfills those requirements.
- Jean Webb, volunteer was previous victim/witness coordinator in Talbot County for 11 years.

❖ **Kent County Sheriff's Office, Victim Unit**

- Shelly McMath explained her duties as a Victim/Witness provider at the Kent County Sheriff's Office.
 - Makes contact with all of the Sheriff's Office crime victims and provides them with information including: non-legal services, assistance and direct support,
 - Provides resources available in the community such as counseling, court accompaniment, funding and compensation and crime prevention.
 - Assists other police agencies and counties including Rockville Police Department, Chestertown Police Department, Kent Bureau of Investigations and Washington College to promote victim and witness safety.
 - Assist Kent County State's Attorney's Office with interview sessions.
 - Sends all victims outreach letters or contact them by telephone.
 - Sets up victim services displays at local community banks throughout the year.
 - Acts as liaison between victims and deputy's.
 - On call 24/7.
- The Sheriff's Office provides a vehicle which has "victim services" on it which serves as a constant reminder to those in the community and serves as a vehicle for transportation for women and children to shelters, court and/or hospital visits.
- MVOC Grant funded position for 6 years.
- Kent County is the only State's Attorney's Office without a Victim Service Coordinator.

❖ **Queen Anne's County Detention Center**

- Warden LaMonte Cooke expressed his appreciation for his invitation to attend the Board meeting.
- He emphasized that the Queen Anne's County Detention Center has a great working relationship with other criminal justice agencies and that corrections play a very important role in investigations because they handle offenders who are awaiting trial and sentencing.
- Maryland Correctional Administrators Association (MCAA)
 - Statewide organization representative of state and local corrections, parole and probations and various other agencies in the criminal justice system that work with detention.
 - Meetings are held every other month and they deal with issues concerning corrections and look at developing relationships with other criminal justice agencies.
 - In recent years, the MCAA has worked with the Sheriff's Association and the Maryland Chiefs in areas of legislation and are very much involved when police look at legislative issues that negatively impacted corrections.
- Prisoner Rape Elimination Act (PREA)
 - Federal civil law to address sexual violence behind bars.
 - PREA's guidelines apply to all detention facilities, including federal and state prisons, jails and juvenile centers.
- Queen Anne's County Detention Center work within the community to minimize youth coming into adult facilities and they have been successful with their Beyond Scared Straight Program
- Board members were asked to contact Warden Cooke or Mary Lou McDonough, Director of Prince George's County Correctional Center if they had an interest in attending and/or presenting at the MCAA.

❖ **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**

- Retired Judge Owen Wise discussed Child In Need of Assistance Cases (CINA) and Court Appointed Special Advocates.
 - CINA cases involve children and their families who require court intervention because the child has either been abused or neglected, has a developmental disability or a mental disorder, and the child's parents, guardian or custodian are unable or unwilling to give the child proper care and attention.

- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) provides an educated, compassionate adult to advocate for the safety and well-being of children removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect.
- Often the special advocate is the only consistent adult in the child's life,
- CASA volunteers provide support and guidance as the child navigates a complex and often confusing child welfare system.
- CASA volunteers usually handle just one case at a time so they can give each child's case the sustained, personal attention he or she deserves.

❖ **Queen Anne's County Child Advocacy Center (CAC)**

- Patricia Melcer thanked everyone for allowing her to be at the meeting. She explained that for years children who were suspected of being abused in Queen Anne's County had to endure an investigative process with six different agencies and as a result were retraumatized most of the time.
- In an effort to reduce further trauma, the Child Abuse Response Evaluation Center (CARE) was formally established in September 2011, in Queen Anne's County to provide the child a safe environment for child victims of sexual and physical abuse.
- The Care Center is a partnership between the Queen Anne's County Office of the Sheriff, the Office of the State's Attorney, the Department of Social Services, Maryland State Police, Centerville Police Department and the Mid-Shore Medical Program.
- The Care Center children come in for one investigation and services are coordinated.

❖ **For All Seasons, Inc.**

- Dick Goldstein, Clinical Social Worker and Director of For All Seasons, Inc. provided some background information and information about services provided by For All Seasons, Inc.
 - For All Seasons, Inc. is a private non-profit corporation governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.
 - The program has been in operation since 1986.
 - Initial funding for the program was provided by the Department of Human Resources to begin crisis work with victims of sexual assault, counseling for victims of sexual violence and establish a hotline.
 - For All Seasons, Inc. is now a multifaceted human services organization with offices in each of the Mid-Shore five counties and provides the following services:
 - Operates a 24/7 Spanish and English speaking hotline
 - Crisis counseling for victims of sexual assault, child victims of neglect and/or physical abuse
 - Licensed as a mental health clinic staffing psychiatrists, clinical social workers, and psychiatric nurses
 - Works closely with law enforcement and SARC programs
 - Provide crisis intervention for children in foster care and residential treatment facilities.

❖ **Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence**

- Jeanne Yeager provided information about services provided by Mid-Shore Council.
 - Mid-Shore council is the only Domestic Violence Program which services Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Kent, and Talbot counties.
 - Created as a crisis program in 1980.
 - Provides a 24 hour hotline and 24 hour shelter
 - Expanded to provide legal advocacy services
 - Works collaboratively with law enforcement and the lethality assessment project.

❖ **Queen Anne's County Commissioner's Office**

- Steve Arentz, President of the Queen Anne's County Commissioner Office expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to attend the meeting.

- He advised that there is a great deal of collaboration in Queen Anne's County amongst criminal justice agencies.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Guests and Board members were thanked for their participation.

**The next Board meeting will be held at
Anne Arundel Police Department Headquarters
on
Wednesday, July 11, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.**